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ABSTRACT

Packaged materials designed for use by parents of educationally unserved and underserved severely handicapped individuals and available through a telecommunication system have been developed by Project TELEPAC at Utah State University. Material development has been accomplished through application of an educational research and development cycle involving seven major steps such as definition of curriculum content, critique by experts, formative and summative evaluation. (Author/CL)

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Project TELEPAC

# Packaged Home Instructional Materials for Parents of the Severely Handicapped: A Concept Analysis

by

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## Abstract

Packaged materials designed for use by parents of educationally unserved and underserved severely handicapped individuals have been developed by Project TELEPAC at Utah State University. Development of materials has been accomplished through application of an educational research and development (R&D) cycle. The authors describe project rationale, the R&D process, and a concept analysis of the package components.

# [1]Packaged Home Instructional Materials for Parents Of the Severely Handicapped: A Concept Analysis

Today, as Abeson, Bolick and Hass have observed, "it is a matter of public policy that the purpose of the public school is to provide every child with the opportunity for a free, public, and appropriate education" (1975, p. 69). However, despite recent federal legislation mandating comprehensive school programs (e.g., P.L. 94-142: The Education for All Handicapped Act) some exceptional children are not presently receiving educational services (unserved). Additionally, some children are not receiving educational services consistent with the severity of their handicapping conditions (underserved). In an attempt to create a model which bridges the gap between available and needed services for the severely handicapped, the staff of Project TELEPAC at Utah State University has incorporated (a) the application of instructional technology to develop packaged home instructional materials, and (b) the use of parents as a major treatment resourse. In Hofmeister's view:

> The very existence of parent packages suggests a changing view of the role of parents. While concerned educators have long tried to involve parents in decision making, few have looked upon parents as a major treatment resource.... The educator cannot afford to overlook a new resource, let alone one with such a manpower potential (Note 1, p. 5).

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Package Development

An educational research and development (R&D) process was employed by TELEPAC programmers to help guarantee the effectiveness of completed materials. The R&D approach has been described by Borg and Gall (1971, p. 413) as the most promising strategy we now have for the improvement of instruction. Seven major stages in the TELEPAC R&D cycle (Hofmeister, Note 2) are listed and explained briefly below.

1. Definition of curriculum content. During this first stage of the R&D cycle, instructional needs are analyzed and a search for materials already in circulation is conducted. Failure to locate relevant materials results in the development of a package prospectus.

2. Development of a prototype. The second stage of the TELEPAC R&D cycle is the construction of a prototype instructional package. The prototype embodies the concept analysis/operational analysis and instructional objectives specified in the package prospectus.

3. Critique by experts. Feedback for revision purposes is gathered at this stage from experts (e.g., teacher trainers) who are asked to evaluate the material from technical and instructional points of view.

4. Programmer as parent. In this stage the package developer (programmer) takes the role of a parent and uses the package with from three to five severely handicapped children.

5. Volunteer as parent. After further revisions have been made based upon data gathered in stage four, volunteers are asked to interact with children using prototype materials, and further revisions are made in preparation for an individual formative evaluation with parents (stage six).

6. Formative evaluation. In this stage of the R&D cycle, field test versions of the final packages are used in homes of volunteer parents, and data are gathered to identify sections needing revision prior to the final, summative evaluation.

7. Summative evaluation. In this final stage, a second group of volunteer parents use the revised packages in their homes. Product effectiveness is determined via controlled experimental procedures.

## Package Components

In the manner suggested by Thiagarajan (Note 3), the concept packaged instruction for parents of the severely handicapped may be described in terms of critical (definitive) attributes, and those characteristics which may be varied without altering the concept (variable attributes).

Table 1 presents examples of the critical and variable attributes of the Parent Involvement Packages developed by Project TELEPAC. Critical attributes of the parent packages are in two broad categories: (a) procedural information which is included to optimize the parents' instructional ability and, (b) an

application of the principles of programmed instruction (e.g., a monitoring device is built into packages to provide immediate knowledge of results or feedback) to parents and students regarding curriculum progress. Broad categories of variable attributes are content and purpose. Based upon the needs established in stage one of the R&D cycle, a wide range of content is possible, and packages may be developed for several purposes including initial instruction, remediation, or skill maintenance. The list of variable attributes resulting from the concept analysis is extensive and beyond the scope of this paper.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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## Summary

Packaged home instructional materials have been designed for use by parents of the severely handicapped through an application of the educational R&D process. These packages can be used by parents of individuals not now in a training program, or by parents who wish to work together with teachers to supplement school instruction.

Project TELEPAC is currently conducting a summative evaluation of three types of parent packages in the homes of severely handicapped children. Academic packages include Counting Objects, Letter Naming, and Written Name, Address and Telephone Number.

Table 1

Critical and Variable Attributes of the TELEPAC Parent Involvement Packages

| Category of Attribute | Attribute |
|---|---|
| Critical: Inclusion of procedural information regarding the teaching task | Instructions relative to length of sessions, seating arrangements, selection of a time to teach |
| | Teaching scripts |
| | Correction procedures |
| | Behavior management techniques (e.g., how to reinforce desired responses) |
| Critical: Application of principles of programmed instruction | Instructional objectives |
| | Teaching scripts and materials developed through concept and operational analysis |
| | Monitoring devices to provide knowledge of results to users |
| | Feedback sheets to provide information for resource people regarding usage |
| Variable: Content | Academic (e.g., number skills) |
| | Self-help (e.g., zipping) |
| | Leisure time (e.g., use of pencils and crayons) |
| Variable: Purpose | Initial instruction in academic, self-help or leisure time skills |
| | Practice activities to maintain skills learned in previous packages |

Self-help packages include Zipping, Emergency Telephone Skills and Shoes and Socks. Leisure time packages have been designed to provide initial instruction (Recreation I) and/or practice in skills learned in previous packages (Recreation II).

For a list of the Parent Involvement Packages available at cost which have been developed for the severely handicapped and/or other exceptional individuals, write to Dr. Charles Atkinson, Project Director, Project TELEPAC, Exceptional Child Center, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, 84322.

## Reference Notes

1. Hofmeister, A. The parent as an instructional agent. Paper presented at the Management and Training of Paraprofessional Personnel Workshop, Utah State University, Logan, June, 1975.

2. Hofmeister, A. Models for educational research and development. (Resource Paper). Logan, Utah: Utah State University, Special Education Instructional Technology Project, 1975.

3. Thiagarajan, S. The history and futurology of programmed tutoring by paraprofessionals. Paper presented at the Management and Training of Paraprofessional Personnel Workshop, Utah State University, Logan, June, 1975.

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